

Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice

Clean Air Health Alliance

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Government Finally Responds to Community Outcry Over Radioactive Waste Scandal

U.S. EPA, DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL & NAVY PUT HOLD ON TRANSFERS OF NAVY PROPERTY AT HUNTERS POINT SHIPYARD DUE TO TETRA TECH'S FALSIFICATION OF RADIOACTIVE SOIL SAMPLES AND QUESTIONS ABOUT POTENTIAL PUBLIC EXPOSURE TO RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL AT AND NEAR THE SHIPYARD

Community & Environmental Justice Groups Demand Tetra Tech be Fired, Call for a Cessation of Work and Comprehensive Independent New Testing at the Shipyard and Adjacent Areas Where Radioactive and Toxic Waste May Have Been Illegally Dumped, and Full Cleanup

San Francisco, CA – In response to the escalating community outcry over the falsification of radioactive soil samples, and concerns about reports of possible illegal dumping of radioactive soils by the US Navy's contractor Tetra Tech at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Superfund Site in Bayview Hunters Point, San Francisco, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, State of California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the US Navy have agreed to put on hold any further transfers of Navy property at the Shipyard.

The September 13th letter from US EPA and DTSC to the US Navy states that these agencies met on July 14th with the Navy to discuss the Tetra Tech issue, and says in relevant part the following:

“...integrity of the data from the Navy's contractor Tetra Tech ECI, Incorporated, (“Tetra Tech”) is of the utmost importance in ensuring the cleanup decisions are made in a manner that protects public health and the environment and complies with requirements of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). We understand that several agencies are currently engaged in ongoing investigations regarding the nature and extent of Tetra Tech's misrepresentation of data delivered to the Navy. I am confirming that we agreed ...that the Navy will not propose any further transfers of Navy property at HPNS without results of these investigations and/or any other Navy action necessary to clarify the actual potential public exposure to radioactive material at and near the HPNS.”

The scandal first came to light several years ago when whistleblowers alleged that from 2008 to 2012 Tetra Tech falsified radioactive soil samples from the shipyard. After the Navy investigated the complaints, they **identified 386 soil samples as “anomalous.”**

A US Nuclear Regulatory Commission letter to Tetra Tech EC, Inc. on February 11, 2016 stated:

“Specifically, between November 18, 2011, and June 4, 2012, when tasked with obtaining soil samples to ascertain the amount of residual radioactivity in specific locations within Parcel C, Tetra Tech employees instead obtained soil samples from other areas that were suspected to be less contaminated. The Tetra Tech employees then represented (on related chain-of-custody records) that the samples had been obtained from the specified locations. As a result, it could have appeared that residual radioactivity within the specified locations in Parcel C was lower than it actually was.”

While residents and community and environmental justice organizations applaud the government agencies new action to put a hold on new transfers of Shipyard land from the Navy, they are furious that the Navy and government regulatory agencies have allowed Tetra Tech to continue working at the site. Tetra Tech has worked on cleanup of contamination at the Shipyard since the 1990’s, likely having been responsible for many thousands of soil samples over decades which residents and advocates no longer trust.

“It’s about time our government agencies started protecting the residents instead of protecting a giant corporation that apparently falsified soil samples, putting the health of thousands of people and our environment at risk,” said Bradley Angel, Executive Director of Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice.

“We demand that Tetra Tech be fired and that they pay for a trustworthy and independent entity to conduct comprehensive retesting of the entire Shipyard site and adjacent areas. We demand a full and proper cleanup of radioactive and toxic waste at the Shipyard site,” said Marie Harrison of Greenaction, a long time Bayview Hunters Point community leader. “With climate change causing the sea levels to rise, leaving so much radioactive and toxic waste along the waterfront is a disaster ready to happen.”

“The stopping the transferring property from the Navy to the city is a good first step. A Cease-and-Desist order of all work at the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard should be executed immediately,” said Ray Tompkins of the Clean Air Health Alliance. “We demand a proper investigation by federal and state agencies with independent universities and meaningful citizen participation for locating and cleaning up the illegally dumped radioactive soil at and near the Shipyard site, with testing including both surface scanning and core sampling.”

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